



Memorandum

To: City Council Members

From: Colin Compton, Neighborhood and Housing Specialist, Economic Development

cc: Mayor David E. Weiss
Chief Administrative Officer Jeri E. Chaikin
Economic Development Director, Laura E. Englehart

Date: January 25, 2021

Re: Request to contract with Kay Coaching for 2021 neighborhood engagement work

The Economic Development Department requests approval to enter into a contract with Kay Coaching in the amount of \$65,000 to continue providing neighborhood engagement support services during the period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

This memo provides: (1) background on our current neighborhood engagement work with Kay Coaching, (2) an overview of our proposed direction in 2021, and (3) an addendum providing testimonials from residents on how this work has affected them.

I. Background: Neighborhood Engagement in Moreland

Since September 2015, the City has conducted neighborhood engagement work in the Moreland neighborhood to better connect residents to their neighbors, build on neighborhood assets, and support resident-led projects and ideas. At that time, Kay Coaching was selected through an RFP process to begin Community Network Building work in Moreland, including establishing monthly Neighbor Nights and supporting resident ideas and projects stemming from those gatherings. The Economic Development Department took on management of neighborhood engagement work in 2017 and recommends continuing the work with Kay Coaching in 2021.

Neighborhood Engagement in Moreland: Where We've Come Since 2017

The Moreland network has grown in size. From a list of 79 Moreland residents in 2017, we now have contact information for over 218 Moreland network members (an increase of 276%). This represents residents who have attended events and conversations over the past four years and who now receive regular updates on what's happening in the neighborhood and how they can participate.

The network has grown in complexity, from a small group of resident stewards focused primarily on Neighbor Night to a robust group of resident stewards at deeper levels of involvement in Moreland and beyond. A few examples of this increased complexity include conversations about race via a *Working Toward Racial Harmony* series, efforts to break down barriers to PTO involvement, mental health and wellness, and work to address neighborhood quality of life issues such as traffic volume and speed. Efforts like these occurred while residents also fostered inclusive, welcoming spaces for fun activities such as crafting clubs, book clubs, holiday celebrations, and more.

Moreland residents' perception of their neighborhood has changed, as evidenced by the resident testimonials we have documented. Through the process of forging relationships with neighbors that they did not know prior to this effort, Moreland residents have a new perspective of their neighborhood and their place within it. Residents now feel safer walking their streets, are more connected to proactive efforts to improve the community, have more pride in being from Moreland, and much more. Simultaneously, outsiders' perceptions of Moreland have changed as a result of the vibrancy and storytelling unleashed by this work.

The neighborhood is more resilient, most strongly evidenced by the network's reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the foundation built in previous years, Moreland residents stayed connected virtually in 2020 using the arts, political efforts, intimate group discussions, skill sharing, holiday celebrations, and more. In 2020 alone, there were approximately 192 individual Moreland network gatherings. As a reminder, a comprehensive overview of all that happened in the Moreland network in 2020 was presented at the December 2020 Neighborhood Revitalization and Development Committee meeting and can be viewed [here](#).

II. Neighborhood Engagement in 2021

As the network grows and becomes more complex, the time and resources needed to support it also increase. This is true not just for the City, but also for Moreland network stewards and Kay Coaching. As more residents are brought into the work, ideas and conversations generate demand that must be supported. In 2021, we believe it is time to reflect holistically on the success of this work in Moreland thus far and plan ahead for its future to ensure there is infrastructure to meet demand, both in Moreland and beyond.

Approach

In 2021, we plan to continue our work with Kay Coaching using a concurrent, collaborative approach among Moreland network stewards, Kay Coaching, and the City to:

1. **Maintain resident support and momentum in Moreland through 2021.** The past year was a flurry of activity that we anticipate to continue into 2021. Continuing to provide support and coaching to residents in 2021 is essential, especially in light of the ongoing pandemic and spin-off issues it may present.
2. **Conduct a reflection and planning process to address:**
 - Reflection on and documentation of successes achieved in Moreland via Community Network Building work.
 - The work's future in Moreland and the types of support needed to ensure its longevity and success. Since this work is relationship-based and ongoing, stability is essential. Obstacles such as staff or consultant turnover or insufficient funding could prove catastrophic to the investment and progress made thus far. A forward-thinking framework can help address these issues while also exploring opportunities at-hand such as new partnerships within Shaker and future philanthropic support.
 - How and when neighborhood engagement beyond Moreland occurs. This work is not one-size-fits-all. Using the same approach, it will not automatically produce the same results elsewhere. The City must be intentional and thoughtful about how and when to invest additional resources on this work in other areas of the City. Using the success in Moreland as a starting point, future neighborhood engagement work must be tailored to the individual characteristics, assets, and needs of other neighborhoods. In 2021, we intend to lay groundwork for how to approach successful neighborhood engagement and support in more Shaker neighborhoods.

Opportunities

As we reflect on our success and plan for the future, there are a number of powerful opportunities to take advantage of, including:

- **A track record of success.** The City's investment in the social fabric of Moreland has paid off. Residents who stepped up to lead years ago are engaged and have deepened their commitment and involvement, without any residents "dropping out" thus far. Documenting this track record is integral for exploring additional partnerships.
- **Increased community collaboration.** This work benefits all Shaker institutions, especially the primary three: the City, Schools, and Library. These three bodies are working more closely than ever before thanks to efforts such as Forward Together and the Shaker Engagement Collaborative, a cross-institutional working group. A collaborative approach to neighborhood engagement's future in Shaker could be both essential and invaluable.

Kay Coaching's Role in 2021 to Support this Approach

To continue support of the Moreland network in 2021, Kay Coaching will provide assistance and support to residents including:

- One-on-one conversations with residents to identify their interests, talents, and concerns and to offer them opportunities to make connection with neighbors and contribute to the network;
- Individual and group coaching sessions to support stewards in planning, organizing, and facilitating gatherings or events;
- Individual and group coaching sessions focused on the philosophy and practices of Community Network Building;
- Group leadership workshops for deliberation and decision-making around network opportunities, priorities, and allocation of energy.

To support the effort to reflect on the network's success and plan for its future, Kay Coaching will:

- Assist City staff with planning and facilitating workshops with Moreland network stewards to reflect, document their work, and plan for its future;
- Assist City staff to prepare network stewards for discussions with the City and other institutions about their work.

III. Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City contract with Kay Coaching in 2021 to continue providing neighborhood engagement support in Moreland.

Since 2017, the Economic Development Department has executed three twelve month contracts with Kay Coaching. Two of these contracts were for \$55,000 per contract and the most recent was for \$58,000. This year's contract increase reflects the ongoing complexity of supporting Community Network Building in Moreland as well as assistance with documentation and strategic planning.

The Economic Development Department requests approval to enter into a contract with Kay Coaching in the amount of \$65,000 to continue providing neighborhood engagement services from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. This cost been allocated for in Economic Development's neighborhood engagement budget. This item is requested on first reading and as an emergency to allow our neighborhood engagement work to continue uninterrupted.

The Neighborhood Revitalization and Development Committee reviewed this request at their January 13 meeting and voted in favor of recommending the contract request to City Council. Committee members present spoke enthusiastically about the transformative benefits that this work has had both in Moreland and in Shaker at-large and the advantage of establishing a plan for long-term success for the effort. Additionally, several members of the Moreland neighborhood network were present with Iris Anderson stating “I’ve been here a long time, through peaks and valleys, and it feels like we’re on a peak again. It feels good.”

The Finance Committee reviewed this request at their January 19 meeting and voted in favor of recommending the contract request to City Council. Committee members commented on the positive impact this work has had on Moreland residents and on the City’s capacity to mobilize residents around community needs and goals.

Addendum: Resident Narrative

“How have you given to or received value from the neighborhood network during the pandemic?”

I: [The network has] given me motivation and energy. One person can’t do everything and it’s good to know there is community. To know there are like-minded people willing to work toward a goal.

C: Continuation and strengthening of what I’ve always gotten: an extended family. People checking in on me, finding ways to connect, going on walks.

S: It’s been invaluable. It’s great to have a way to connect. To feel connected with the neighborhood because we don’t see each other much in person anymore. It makes it feel safer in the community.

C: I learned to appreciate what is going on in Moreland. I came here from Cleveland Heights. When I moved here, I couldn’t establish myself. When I found out about NN, I immediately embraced it.

M: Things that happened [in 2020] seemed to want to pull us all apart, but we clung together stronger. If we hadn’t had that foundation of the work we’ve done, we would have been corks on a rough sea. Being able to have the foundation we’ve built over the past few years let us lean on that and not just cry into our pillows.

P: The fact that we have built a neighborhood connection is crucial because so many people would have been isolated.

D: I value most, to be able to come to a larger community of people who have common concerns that I do. I don’t have to feel or act alone in any situation related to living in the neighborhood.

“What’s changed for you in the past year in your relationship to the neighborhood network?”

C: I was living here, but I didn’t feel like I was part of Shaker. Now with all the activities, there’s a place for me. Not that I didn’t think Shaker was a good community, but now it feels like there’s a better place for me.

I: I have learned to relinquish control over things. When I wasn’t able to do something, a neighbor stepped up right away and it went from there. You don’t have to be a one-man band and take it all on. It’s just great to know there are people who have the time, motivation, and energy to help.

P: It’s become more intimate. I feel more a part of and more responsible to contribute to. Before it was “there” and now it’s something that’s a part of me.

M: It definitely feels more intimate.

“If we hadn’t built this network, how do you think your experience with the pandemic would have been different?”

P: I hear people talking about the loneliness they are experiencing. I thank god that is not my story. I am still connected to my neighbors and my community. The pandemic has been a transition, but it has not been the elimination of community. We still have our community.

M: Like being on the rack being tortured. Being so isolated would be the worst kind of torture.

C: It would have been very stressful. Aside from connecting with family and relatives, I don’t know if I could have mastered my emotions. I’m a social person and I like to go out.

S: It would have been more stressful. All the online network events have been able to give us something to look forward to, keep a positive attitude. Even though I play our church service every week, we get more of a human connection at Neighbor Night because we’re able to actually talk.

ORDINANCE NO.

BY:

Authorizing a professional community engagement and capacity building consultant personal services agreement with Kay Coaching, LLC for continued neighborhood engagement work for the City for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, in a total amount not to exceed \$65,000, and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, the City entered into an agreement on September 1, 2015, with Kay Coaching, LLC (Kay Coaching) to provide a community engagement and capacity building program; and

WHEREAS, since September 2015, the City has conducted neighborhood engagement work within the Moreland neighborhood in order to better connect residents, build on the neighborhood assets, and support resident-led projects and initiatives and Kay Coaching has helped to facilitate the neighborhood engagement work in the Moreland area; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to maintain its commitment to the neighborhood engagement initiative and build on the success already achieved in the Moreland neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, this Council has determined that the City should enter into a contract for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 with said consultant in an amount not to exceed SIXTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$65,000).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Shaker Heights, State of Ohio:

Section 1. Pursuant to Section 141.03 of the Codified Ordinances, the Mayor is hereby authorized to enter into a personal professional services consultant agreement with Kay Coaching, LLC for continued neighborhood engagement work for the City for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, in the total amount not to exceed SIXTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$65,000). Said agreement shall be in the form as approved by the Director of Law.

Section 2. This ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety and welfare for the reason that it is necessary in the current operation of the City and further, so that the contract can be entered into as soon as possible to continue the neighborhood engagement work that is ongoing and, therefore, this ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its enactment and approval by the Mayor.

Enacted

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2021.

DAVID E. WEISS, Mayor

Attest:

JERI E. CHAIKIN
Clerk of Council
coun10/0119kaycoaching